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# UNH Instructor Wins Prestigious Writing Grant

Erika Mantz

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## UNH Instructor Wins Prestigious Writing Grant

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DURHAM, N.H. – Meredith Hall, assistant director of the composition program at the University of New Hampshire, was awarded the 2005 Gift of Freedom Award for her creative nonfiction from A Room of Her Own Foundation. The \$50,000 award is the largest literary grant of its kind in the country. She also received the 2005 Pushcart Prize and her essay “Shunned” was named a notable essay in *The Best American Essays 2005*.

The yearlong financial support from A Room of Her Own Foundation allowed her to take a leave from the university to work on her first book, *Without a Map*. The memoir is a series of personal essays about her young adult life. The foundation is committed to Virginia Woolf’s assertion that a woman needs time and space to herself to write. Award winners must have a track record of commitment to their art and that being freed from their wage-earning will make a substantial difference in their creative work. In addition to the financial support, award recipients are assigned a mentor.

Hall was the only full-time nontraditional student when she attended Bowdoin College on a full scholarship. She graduated summa cum laude in 1993 at the age of 44 and then earned her master’s in creative writing from UNH in 1995. Hall has been assistant director of UNH’s composition program since 2003, and has been teaching writing at UNH since earning her masters.

Her work appears in Creative Nonfiction and in two anthologies, *In Fact: Best of Creative Nonfiction* and *True Stories from the Midlife Underground*, which is due out in 2006.